

will be notified. Closures will change to reflect current conditions and animal behavior. When the criteria for establishing a closure no longer exist, the area will return to its previous zoning status.

Climbing and Mountaineering Study Areas

Climbing and Mountaineering Study Areas are an additional overlay designation in management areas where the National Park Service would focus efforts on improving indicators for mountaineering. While encounter rate is an indicator commonly used as a measurement tool for solitude in activities such as hiking, backpacking, and skiing, the National Park Service recognizes that it may not be the most useful indicator for gauging the wilderness character of the climbing experience because of the inherent social nature of climbing, safety considerations, and access needs.

In these Climbing and Mountaineering Study Areas, the agency would survey users and work with mountaineering groups and the general public to determine potential methods for measuring visitor capacity. The registration requirement would result in complete and accurate use data. Monitoring resource conditions and the visitor experience in the study areas would enable the National Park Service to test other indicators besides encounter rate to determine visitor capacity at these locations. Through adaptive management and with up to date information on social and resource conditions, it is expected that visitor capacity in the study areas could exceed that in the surrounding management areas.

The Climbing and Mountaineering Study Areas are adjacent to Portals, where encounter rates exceed those prescribed for the surrounding management area. (See above description of Portals.)

MANAGEMENT AREA DESIGNATIONS

Management areas are designated in each alternative. Table 2-4 summarizes the percentage of the park in each management area under each alternative.

Table 2-4: Percentage of Park and Preserve in Each Management Area by Alternative

	Alternative			
	B	C	D	E
Natural	49%	43%	38%	17%
Primitive	16%	20%	23%	28%
Backcountry	0%	2%	3%	20%
Mountaineering	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Old Park Special	35%	35%	35%	35%

Portals would be designated in the following areas (see Map 2-6, Mountaineering Study Areas and Portals): Kahiltna Base Camp, southwest fork Kahiltna, Ruth Amphitheater, Pika Glacier, Eldridge Glacier, and Buckskin Glacier.

Backcountry Day Use areas would be designated to cover the area ½ mile on each side of the park road corridor and the area on gravel river bars within ½ mile of each of the following development areas: Savage, Sanctuary, Igloo, and Teklanika Campgrounds, Savage River Bridge, and Toklat Road Camp.

Climbing and Mountaineering Study areas would be designated over portions of six units: Eldridge Glacier (#72), Buckskin Glacier (#73), Upper Ruth (#74), Middle Kahiltna (#78), Little Switzerland (#79), and Kichatna Mountains (#85) (see map 2-6).

Additional backcountry units would be created to cover the park additions and preserve. Table 2-5 lists all of the existing and new backcountry unit numbers and names. The unit numbers appear on management area maps 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, and 2-5. Detailed maps and descriptions of each unit follow at the end of this chapter (maps 2-21 to 2-56).